

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 have been examined, and have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

I. Preliminary Matters

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract due to minor informalities. Accordingly, Applicant has amended the Abstract, and respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection.

The Examiner has objected to the specification due to a minor informality. Accordingly, Applicant has amended the specification, and respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection.

Further, the Examiner has objected to the drawings as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5), because they include reference numerals not mentioned in the specification. In particular, the Examiner maintains that reference numeral “4” of Fig. 1, reference numerals “724”, “728”, “742” and “744” of Fig. 8, reference numerals “104(a)” and “104(b)” of Fig. 15, and reference numeral “189” of Fig. 21, are not mentioned in the specification. Applicant has amended the specification to properly refer to the above reference numerals. Applicant submits that such amendments do not constitute new matter.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over US 6,435,638 B1 to Wilson et al. (“Wilson”) in view of US 6,044,694 to Anderson et al. (“Anderson”)

Claims 1, 3-16 and 18-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson in view of Anderson. On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner

incorrectly referred to Hasegawa et al. (JP 36209522) in the rejection of claims 1, 3-16 and 18-23. Since the arguments set forth by the Examiner on page 4 of the Office Action refer to the Anderson reference, the undersigned contacted the Examiner concerning the discrepancy. The Examiner confirmed that claims 1, 3-16 and 18-23 are rejected in view of Anderson. Therefore, the Examiner faxed over corrected pages 3-5 of the Office Action, which properly recite the Anderson reference.

Turning to the rejections, claims 1, 3-16 and 18-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson in view of Anderson. However, the filing date of Wilson (i.e. October 27, 2000) is after the filing date (i.e. July 7, 2000) of Applicants' foreign priority document JP 2000-207193. Accordingly, Applicants are hereby removing Wilson as a prior art reference by perfecting the claim to foreign priority.

Submitted herewith is a verified English translation of JP 2000-207193. Applicants submit that JP 2000-207193 provides support under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for claims 1, 3-16 and 18-23 of the present Application.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 3-16 and 18-23.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Wilson in view of Anderson, and further in view of US 6,155,664A to Cook ("Cook").

Claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson in view of Anderson as applied to claim 16, above, and further in view of Cook. As stated above,

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Applicants are hereby removing Wilson as a prior art reference by perfecting the claim to foreign priority. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claim 2.

IV. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Wilson in view of Anderson and further in view of US 5,610,635 to Murray et al. ("Murray").

Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson in view of Anderson as applied to claims 1 and 16 above, and further in view of Murray. However, as stated above, Applicants are hereby removing Wilson as a prior art reference by perfecting the claim to foreign priority. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claim 17.

V. Newly added claims

Applicant has added claims 24 and 25 to provide more varied protection for the present invention.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

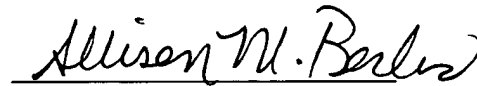
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